



# Joshua Tree National Park Proposed Wilderness Additions

**Size:** 78,150 acres

**Management Agency:** National Park Service, Joshua Tree National Park

**Location:** Riverside County, 9 disconnected units, the largest portion in the southwest corner of the park north of Interstate 10 and west of Cottonwood Pass

*photo courtesy of Doug Steakley*



Joshua Tree National Park attracts visitors from around the world who come to experience this wonderland of sweeping valleys, craggy peaks, narrow canyons, fascinating rock formations, cactus gardens and astounding spring wildflower displays all under a seemingly endless blue sky. Visitors enjoy rock climbing and miles of hiking and riding trails. The seasonal changes in Joshua Tree can be extreme—from bone-baking heat in the summer to dustings of snow in the winter.

The Joshua Tree National Park Wilderness Additions preserve portions of two desert ecosystems: the Mojave and Colorado deserts. At lower elevations, the Colorado desert features natural gardens of creosote bush, ocotillo, and cholla cactus. The higher, moister, and slightly cooler Mojave desert is the special habitat of the Mojave yucca and Joshua tree. One of the park's key attractions, the trademark Joshua trees are members of the yucca family that appear at first glance to have been designed by Dr. Seuss. These odd plants grow tall and twisted with multi-branched tops each ending in a bundle of spiky leaves. Nineteenth-century Mormon settlers thought they looked like the prophet Joshua beckoning them to the Promised Land. The park and the proposed wilderness additions are a critical refuge for bighorn sheep and desert tortoise. These two species are gravely threatened elsewhere by development, poaching, off-road vehicle use and other activities.

## For More Information

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